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ideals of society are corrected, and the recognition and teaching of natural law in the processes of human life are made a part of our system of education.

This awful condition is almost as true, by the way, in our own country as in the cities of Great Britain and Europe. Our cities are a great consuming maelstrom that is draining the best blood from the country, and sinking it in vice, disease, and social discords. Among the sporadic products of this unnaturalness may be noted the discordant marriages and resultant divorcees in our own country; the caste and antagonism of classes in Great Britain; the abnormal glorification of the nation and of war, and of contempt for the individual and for humanity at large in Germany; and the darkness of ignorance and superstition, drunkenness and official cruelty in Russia.

A useful statement of evils should point to their correction. In the law of nature, every thing in life is of the same divine origin, and entitled to perfect respect. If it has proved useless to preach that we were created in "the image of God," it is still true that each human is a concretion of all the substances and intelligences of the universe, and is thereby related in blood and psychic fellowship to every other human.

If we had a true philosophy of life, and a sensible system of character analysis, culture and education, we would teach every boy and girl, by individual analysis, the three vital problems of life: how to live; how to love; and how to labor. In other words, how to develop and preserve all of his physical forces; how to love so that his children will not be scrubs, and he will not need or want divorce courts—and, finally, so that he shall become an efficient factor in working out the function of the human race.

How to restore lost human respect is, then, the problem of all, and every change noted by Mr. Brooks as working out with such painful travail in Great Britain, and every change toward human brotherhood noted by good observers in the other fighting nations, will, we hope, work out such a better and more natural system of human relations as will make an end of war, and of national or racial hatreds,—at least among the higher nations of the Earth. But shall we dare to wish the war to end until all of those fatal ideals of life are melted in common blood, and the time is ripe for the Divine law of human harmony to exercise its dominion over the world?

In our Civil War we endured ten times as much misery, loss of life, and destruction of property in proportion to the white population as the British empire has to the present date, and yet we made more progress during those terrible four years in strength, in modernism, and in liberation from the religious and social superstitions of the dark ages than we probably had during the fifty years before. May we not hope that the warring peoples of Europe will be equally compensated for their sufferings by progress in democracy and humanity?

JOHN E. AYER.

SEATTLE, WASH.

IN PRAISE OF BROMIDES

SIR,—In the November REVIEW you join in discussing the most discussed of all undiscussable subjects. In your editorial, "The Decline and Fall of Culture," you write, to be sure, in "lighter vein," but that doesn't

prevent your drawing a deadly parallel between Winston Churchill, Richard Harding Davis and Eleanor Hallowell Abbott, on the one hand, and Conrad, Galsworthy and Dostoevsky on the other. But I can't see the superiority of the latter trio as a protection of the American people against intellectual disaster.

Mr. Conrad is no more a bulwark of American culture than Mr. Churchill. He contributes no more to culture than does Mr. Churchill. Everybody knows he is a stylist, and that's why he has his public. His readers like to talk about his style. The Conrad style is a nuisance, as the Browning opaqueness used to be. If Browning Clubs hadn't come and gone, there would now be a Conrad Cult. There *is* a Conrad Cult, only it is concealed. People have caught on to the fact that Cults are not Culture. They deny the Cults but acknowledge the Culture. Cults are in disrepute. Culture not yet.

The mention of Conrad's name so close to Browning's reveals the comparative insignificance of Conrad's. With reference to Browning's name, Churchill's is quite as insignificant. But insofar as Mr. Churchill's books furnish the materials of culture—that is, knowledge of the ways of human-kind—they are of equal significance with Mr. Conrad's in any discussion of the subject of culture. Any book that reveals facts of human life, both motives and actions, contributes to culture, which is a mental product formed of the most diverse materials, and the more diverse the better. A man's culture is what he makes out of all he has seen, heard, read, and done, and nothing less than all. The contribution which Mr. Conrad's books make is a knowledge of Mr. Conrad's style. It promotes culture just as much to be acquainted with the dullest style imaginable. Reading, as a means toward culture, is to be judged by the variety of experiences it presents, whether by the reader's contact and reaction or by the writer's power of realism and imagination. And not merely *variety* of experiences, but *quality*. And so I cannot see the superiority of Mr. Conrad over Mr. Churchill.

Conrad, Galsworthy and Dostoevsky represent the "cult of the modern" as truly as that other trio. Their readers are generally rather proud to be known as readers of Conrad, Galsworthy and Dostoevsky. If these writers are read humanly, for their own sakes, all well and good, but the moment they are read for their cleverness, their stylistic performance, their strangeness, their newness, their peculiarities, their startlingness, they lose much of their virtue as cultivators of culture. Then they are worth no more for that purpose than the dullest archaeologist. Not as much.

For culture is the capacity for sympathy and the exercise of sympathy, and sympathy is very human. Culture is not criticism. Culture is appreciation. And the culture that the majority of readers of Conrad, Galsworthy and Dostoevsky claim is claimed chiefly in the name of Literary Criticism.

Modern literature, as such, is no worse than old-time literature. But modern books, if you cannot read them with any feeling that you are in the company of eternal truth, are worse. If you say that the sense of eternal truth is hardly distinguishable, in some cases, from the recognition of the bromidie, I say that the bromidie deserves honor—which isn't an argument, but a statement. Every bromidiom has an honorable and many a one an

inspiring history. The trouble with numerous seekers after culture is that they don't know bromidioms for what they are worth. They are passed over as unimportant, like axioms. But it takes real thinking and real thoughtfulness to understand and enjoy anything so simple and fundamental as a bromidiom or an axiom.

ROBERT HILDRETH.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

WAS PAUL A CHRISTIAN?

SIR,—Although I go to church three times every Sunday, like it, and believe in the power of the church for good, I am neither angry with Mr. Ellwood Hendrick nor do I pity his ignorance. His article *Saul of Tarsus* is an instance of how a man can put one or two good written thoughts in a mess of nonsense. I was glad to see in print on the page of a magazine as great as THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW the words, “—if the world were to follow the advice of Jesus the Kingdom of God would be at hand.” That is sensible and the kind of stuff this world needs. We need to practice and live the truths of Jesus and not dress them up for an hour's parade on Sunday only. But the world certainly does not need to be told that one of the greatest exponents of Christianity was in reality no follower of the Christ at all. One of old said of Paul: “Much learning doth make thee mad.” Now comes forth a modern one who says: “Paul, much logic doth make thee a fool.” There is just about as much connection between learning and madness as there is between logic and a fool. Paul was not mad and he was “no fool,” Mr. Ellwood Hendrick to the contrary notwithstanding. Paul spent less time in establishing dogma than he did in making converts. To be a persecutor and then to bend one's back willingly to the persecutor is some change for one who was logical and consistent to the point of being a fool. For, according to Mr. Hendrick's theory, Paul was so logical that he fooled himself, or else we could not account for his earnestness. Paul talked constantly because he had experienced a salvation which gave him something to talk about, but he never was guilty of making any such a statement as: “Stand up and say you believe, and you are saved; fail in this opportunity, and you shall go to hell.” “BELIEVE!” not “say that you believe,” is the statement which Paul brings out one way and another, over and over. “Faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is to see the reasoning of my logic and to stand up and say you believe.” No, the grandest theme of Christ and of his apostle is love. If love had always been the theme of Christendom, and all Christians had been willing to suffer and to labor for the sake of love, as Paul did, the Kingdom of Righteousness would have been here long ago. As I read Mr. Hendrick's article, I could not help but ask myself the question: “Why is it that some men who have come into possession of one or two great truths imagine that, in order to possess more truth, they must tear to pieces the character of some old hero of the cross, turn the Church over to the bats and owls, or treat all the creeds of Christendom as ‘mere scraps of paper?’” Perhaps somebody may be able to give us an answer some day.

JESSE F. BENTON.

GARY, WEST VIRGINIA.